

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Public Improvements, Design Standards, and Recommendations for downtown Frederick focus on improvements to public rights-of-way, sidewalks, public open space, and key intersections (referred to as the public realm). The intent is to create a unified, safe, and visually attractive environment that supports Downtown Development Plan goals and makes the general downtown area as “the” destination in Frederick. The condition of the public realm is important for creating the desired image and identity of downtown Frederick and for defining the downtown character. Public realm improvements serve to improve an area’s visual quality and act as an investment catalyst, encouraging private property upgrades and new development.

### 4.2 PURPOSE

This chapter establishes design guidelines and concepts for public improvements in downtown Frederick. It identifies public street design elements, landscaping, intersection enhancements, entry treatments, public open space, right-of-way detail, and other unique public realm features within downtown Frederick. Focusing on the public right-of-way, these guidelines attempt to balance pedestrian needs with the vehicular and bicycle needs.

The guidelines in this chapter are intended to be used as a planning tool for public projects and to guide development conditions of approval for private projects. These guidelines contain concepts, graphic material, recommendations and design guidance that will aid in near-term implementation of public area improvement recommendations.

### 4.3 LANDSCAPE CONCEPTS

#### STREET TREES

Street trees are a key element often used to create unified street scenes and soften otherwise discordant arterials. Adding scale, comfort, foliage colors, and textures contribute to downtown’s unique identity and help improve air quality.

- For each block on a street, no more than three species are recommended. Mixed species result in better long-term management because they are less prone to diseases and insects than use of a single species; not all the trees will be lost if a catastrophic disease or infestation should occur. Contrarily, too many species create a lack of visual unity along the street.

- Install structural soil systems to direct new root growth downward below hardscape areas. This helps to postpone root damage caused to the surrounding hardscape and structures. By providing deep watering and air to root systems as appropriate when trees are planted within five feet of any permanent structure/paving/curb, additional service life may be achieved. Structural soil systems are preferred over root barriers as they are often more effective.



*Figure 4-1: Shade tree in downtown Frederick*

- Trees that provide attractive foliage colors, seasonal flowers, or shade are preferred for downtown Frederick (*Figure 4-1*). In addition, trees should be drought-resistant, and species that are native or naturalized to the region are also strongly encouraged. They tend to be easier to maintain as their needs match those of trees occurring naturally in the region, and their visual aesthetic more closely matches that of the surrounding regional vegetation.
- Along 5th Street tree grates are required within sidewalks as they allow for improved accessibility, increased sidewalk usability area, and are consistent with the desired downtown character. On all other downtown streets, tree grates are strongly recommended but not required. Due to the fact that these streets have narrow sidewalks, the extra walkable space makes a huge difference for pedestrians. The ultimate size of the tree trunk should be considered when choosing grates; the grate opening should be appropriately sized to accommodate a mature tree. (Refer to street furnishings in Section 4.6 for tree grate example.)
- Street tree placement shall be carefully considered to avoid conflicts with functions of adjacent businesses. Based on mature growth of each species, avoid conflicting with overhead power lines, utility lines, and structures. They should align with property lines and not block views of storefronts business or signage to the greatest extent possible. Strategic views of the Rocky Mountains to the west should be preserved.
- Street trees shall be spaced approximately 30'-50' on center.
- A minimum of 6' of structural soil shall be provided for trees. The structural soil can be provided under tree grates and pavement.

### DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN AREA TREE PALETTE

Refer to Table 15.10-1: Suggested Planting List in the Town of Frederick Land Use Code (Article 15: DowntownCode) for downtown street tree selection. The recommended palette has been selected for its survivability, snow loading, drought tolerance, native habitat, ease of maintenance, and appearance.

#### Landscaping in Sidewalk Areas

Sidewalk area planting in the Downtown Development Plan area shall include planter pots, landscaped planters/parkways, raised planters, plaza landscaping, and parking lot screening and shading. In an effort to construct public right-of-way improvements to achieve a cohesive appearance and maintain a traditional “Main Street” atmosphere, joint participation between private property owners and the Town will be required. Some of the beautification efforts can be simply implemented by the Town as funding is secured. Cooperation and participation by individual property owners, merchants, special interest groups, and others will be required with the future property development. This may be an opportunity for organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce to facilitate public/private cooperation.

- The use of accent plantings with special qualities (e.g. spring flowers and/or good autumn color) shall be used to accent entry drives and intersections to unify downtown and emphasize downtown as a special area in Frederick.
- Choose species that are hardy and not easily affected by varying temperatures, light, snow/ice, water supply, or handling. Near pedestrian traffic, it is important to anticipate some amount of damage to plants and irrigation, and tougher plant materials will help to maintain an attractive streetscape appearance.
- Choose ornamental and interesting species for highly visible areas such as near seating area entries and intersections (refer to Key Intersections section of this chapter). Use plants with contrasting foliage, color, and texture, scented varieties, or those that have an especially interesting bloom.
- Be aware of necessary sight distance lines for passing traffic and safety issues. At crosswalks and driveways, keep plant material below 18” for pedestrian visibility.
- Choose drought tolerant species that need minimal maintenance and tend to look good all year to ensure a clean and healthy appearance.

## 4.4 SIDEWALKS AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

### SIDEWALKS

Sidewalks are an important component of Frederick's pedestrian circulation network. Sidewalks provide pedestrian access to virtually every activity, and provide critical connections between other modes of travel, including the automobile, public transit, and bicycles. The pedestrian experience plays a very important part in the functionality and the economic health of downtown Frederick. Wide sidewalks, street trees and landscaping, and consistent street furnishings all contribute to a desirable pedestrian street scene.

- Design features such as enhanced paving on walkways, trellis structures, landscaping and low level lighting shall be used to distinguish the pedestrian route from the vehicular route.



*Figure 4-2: Cluster newspaper racks*



*Figure 4-3: Cluster street furniture*

- On-street parallel parking, raised planters, and landscaped sidewalk planting strips shall be used to provide a buffer between pedestrians and moving vehicles.
- Newspaper racks shall be clustered in groups (*Figure 4-2*) to minimize a cluttered sidewalk appearance. Permanent structures to house these racks will also help minimize a cluttered appearance.
- Sidewalks shall have a “through pedestrian zone” that is kept clear of any fixtures and/or obstructions. A minimum of four feet shall be reserved to allow for two people to walk comfortably side by side.
- Sidewalk surface shall be stable, firm, smooth, and slip-resistant, per American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.
- Planting areas, bike racks, street lighting, news racks, and other street furniture shall be contained in the area between the sidewalk and street to keep the “through pedestrian zone” free for walking (*Figure 4-3*).

### CROSSWALKS

Pedestrian crossings are critical components of the pedestrian mobility in downtown Frederick. Pedestrian crossings are located or proposed for primary downtown intersections along 4th, 5th, and 6th Streets.

- Incorporate accent paving (*Figure 4-4*) at key intersections such as 5th Street and Oak Street, and any other crossings that may accommodate heavy pedestrian traffic. Where accent paving is not used, ‘piano key’ (alternating white and black bands) crosswalks should be installed to increase visibility as compared to a standard crosswalk.
- Crosswalks should be a minimum of 10 feet in width.
- Crossing distances shall be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Uninterrupted pedestrian crossings shall be limited to a maximum of 50 feet.
- Turning radius of corners at intersections shall be reduced in order to minimize the crossing distance of pedestrians and help slow traffic. The presence of buses, trucks, and other large vehicles must be considered in designing turning radii. Whenever possible the radii should be no more than 25’.
- Pedestrian crosswalks shall be adequately lighted, have clear sight distances, and be free from view-hindering obstructions such as foliage and poles at crosswalk entries and median refuge islands.
- Countdown pedestrian signals should be employed where high pedestrian count and traffic volume occurs at pedestrian crossings.



*Figure 4-4: Pedestrian crosswalk with accent paving*



## 4.5 LIGHTING CONCEPTS

The Town is strongly encouraged to continue installing traditional lampposts in the downtown (*Figure 4-5*) because this style reinforces and compliments the historic downtown image.

Street lighting plays both an aesthetic and safety role in the downtown area. Therefore, downtown lighting in Frederick should do the following:

- a. Contribute to the safe and efficient use of Frederick streets
- b. Enhance security
- c. Help unify the Downtown Development Plan area
- d. Prevent any lighting from casting glare onto adjacent streets in such a manner as to decrease the safety of vehicular movement
- e. Enhance and encourage evening activities
- f. Use full or partial cut-off lighting fixtures to minimize light pollution.



*Figure 4-5: Traditional lamppost in downtown Frederick*

- Pedestrian street lighting shall be provided along sidewalks and pedestrian pathways in addition to the existing taller street lights, particularly in areas of high pedestrian traffic such as 5th Street.
- The style of lighting in a public parking lot shall relate to the overall architectural design of the surrounding commercial uses, shall not exceed 25' in height, and shall minimize glare into the night sky and adjacent areas. Place parking lot lighting on raised concrete pillars or in planting strips to avoid snow plow damage.
- Accent lighting and uplighting on architectural and landscape features are required to add interest and focal points. Provisions for seasonal lighting are encouraged.
- Electrical service for seasonal/event lighting in trees shall be provided for lights on 5th Street.

## 4.6 STREET FURNISHINGS

Street furnishings serve an aesthetic as well as utilitarian function and can enliven and provide variety to outdoor spaces used for public interaction. Street furniture includes all items placed within the public right-of-way, such as benches, bus shelters, trash receptacles, plant containers, tree grates and guards, bicycle racks, bollards, kiosks, and fountains. Proper design and placement of such amenities will reinforce a unified downtown Frederick design theme and create a lively and festive atmosphere throughout the area. The following general guidelines should be considered when selecting and siting these amenities:

- The design and selection of street furniture shall include considerations for the security, safety, comfort, and convenience of the user. Prior to selecting street furniture, the Public Works Department should review several choices for urban durability of materials and ease of maintenance after installation.
- Street furniture shall be located along street edge of sidewalk and maintain a clear width sufficient to accommodate pedestrian flows.
- To create a more organized and efficient use of sidewalk space, furnishings shall be grouped together rather than scattered. Trash and recycling cans shall be located near benches. A greater number and type of furnishings should be located in higher-use pedestrian traffic areas. All painted metal surfaces should be painted/powder-coated the exact same color for consistency.
- Items should be securely anchored to the sidewalk, and a graffiti-resistant coating shall be applied to street furniture elements to ensure a good longer-term appearance.
- Provisions to accommodate persons with disabilities shall be incorporated into the design and siting of furnishings. This includes a provision for space adjacent to walkways for wheelchair and/or stroller parking.



*Figure 4-6: Low-maintenance bench*

## BENCHES AND TRASH RECEPTACLES

A traditional bench style has been selected to compliment the existing lighting style and overall historic character of downtown Frederick.

A six-foot bench and trash and recycling receptacles shall be placed approximately every 100 feet on 5th Street every 200 feet on downtown commercial streets that intersect 5th, and should be clustered at (future) transit stops such as at the intersection of 5th Street and Colorado Boulevard, and public plazas. When the existing benches and trash receptacles need replacing, they shall be

replaced with furnishings of the same or similar metal style as shown in *Figure 4-6* and *Figure 4-7*. Where public seating is sponsored by a group or donated by an individual, a small plaque may be attached to the seating to memorialize that donation or sponsorship.



*Figure 4-7: Trash receptacle*



*Figure 4-8: Tree grate*



*Figure 4-9: Bike rack*

## TREE GRATES

The use of tree grates is required along heavily used pedestrian streets such as 5th Street, although they are appropriate anywhere in the Downtown Development Plan. Tree grates provide more area for pedestrians on the sidewalk while reinforcing the downtown character. The recommended tree grate for downtown Frederick must comply with American Disability Act (ADA) regulations and must be comparable in design to that illustrated in *Figure 4-8*.

## BIKE RACKS

Bike racks shall be located near (future) transit stops such as the intersection of 5th Street and Colorado Boulevard, within commercial centers such as Miners Square, adjacent to schools and civic buildings such as The Carbon Valley Park and Recreation Center and the Town Hall, and near employment centers, as well as locations on private property. These amenities will encourage bicycle ridership and provide an attractive alternative to locking bicycles to trees and light poles. Along downtown streets it is required to provide bike racks at key locations on every block. The “inverted U” shape style works well in a downtown environment because it allows bikes to be parked parallel to the sidewalk, which keeps them out of the through-pedestrian walkway of the sidewalk. It also is a preferred design by cyclists due to its functionality and ease of use (*Figure 4-9*).



### BUS SHELTERS

As the population of Frederick grows and the importance of having a public transit system increases, bus shelters may become an integral element in downtown Frederick's circulation and can be the key to making public transit in the downtown more convenient and comfortable for riders. They shall be conveniently located at parking areas, shopping areas, event areas, and public facilities through coordination with local transportation agencies. Shelters shall have a clean uncluttered appearance, and the incorporation of backlit advertisements on the sides of bus shelters should also be considered because they will increase nighttime lighting in the bus shelters, as well as provide additional revenue for the Town.

Transit stops shall provide benches and lighting for the comfort of passengers waiting for their transit vehicle and shall take the needs of disabled users into consideration.

### ADDITIONAL SITE FURNISHINGS

Newspaper racks, drinking fountains, kiosks, etc., should also be carefully located throughout the downtown area. Drinking fountains should be located in public gathering areas such as Crist Park. Kiosks should be located at key locations between parking and shopping areas, and paseo entries. They can effectively direct visitors to restrooms, shopping areas, parking, and public facilities. Specific locations that would benefit from kiosks include the two proposed paseo entrances on 5th Street between Elm Street and Locust Street. Other street furniture (banners, telephone boxes, trash receptacles, planters, and informational displays, etc.) shall be located at regularly spaced intervals on 5th Street. Additional locations shall be determined through public improvement design plans.

Some of the envisioned public improvements will require private property owner participation and/or cooperation at the time of redevelopment. Others can be simply implemented by the Town as funding is secured and programmed as a part of the capital improvement program.

## 4.7 PUBLIC ART

Public art is another way of adding vitality and character to the street scene. The Frederick Arts Commission (FAC) currently holds an annual fall art exhibition, and completes one public art project per year. Funding for the annual project is raised by setting aside an amount from public construction projects equal to at least 1% of the construction costs in a dedicated art fund. In addition, the FAC Master Plan calls for private developers to add to the public art throughout the Town.

## PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS, DESIGN STANDARDS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Public art is an intriguing way to enhance the pedestrian environment of sidewalks, plazas, paseos, or other pedestrian spaces. Art can act as a focal point as well as a functional feature (e.g. benches). Careful thought should be given to the design and placement of public art to ensure that it is evenly distributed throughout the downtown area. Locations for public art pieces are suggested at most public open spaces or along pedestrian passageways.

- Public art can be used in a variety of locations (*Figure 4-10*). It can be small elements such as tile banding on a stair riser, or large pieces such as sculptures.
- Public art can be used in public spaces to add interest and character. It can be an interactive media, such as a climbing structure, or include randomly timed or motion-activated water spouts.
- Public art can be used as a way-finding feature to attract pedestrians to key locations like Town Hall, Crist Park, or paseos.
- Seating areas and signage are other opportunities for public art.
- Public art can be integrated into other features like fountains or water elements (*Figure 4-11*).



*Figure 4-10: Public art incorporated into a staircase*



*Figure 4-11: Police Department sculpture with water element*

### 4.8 SIGNAGE

A strong signage program is one of the fastest ways to make an immediate impact and “brand” the downtown area.

A downtown logo and signage program shall be established to help distinguish downtown Frederick from other areas of town. The logo can be placed on gateways, signs, and banners to develop both a sense of place and an identity for the area.

#### DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

- The signage program shall include a common directional sign with directional arrows and labeling to denote key shopping areas, parking, civic buildings, and tourist attractions (*Figure 4-12*).
- Directional signs shall be oriented to vehicular traffic. Signs should be lighted, landscaped, and placed permanently at roadsides or within medians at key locations around downtown. These signs shall be smaller than the Town gateways, but similar in style.
- The directional signs shall reflect design components of the gateway and street signs.



*Figure 4-12: Directional signage*

#### STREET SIGNAGE

Street signs provide one of the strongest unifying elements in the signage program. Every street within the Downtown Development Plan area shall be identified in the same way to provide a recognizable sense of repetition that clearly enables a motorist, bicyclist, or pedestrian to know they are in downtown Frederick. Downtown street signs shall include the following:

- a color unique to downtown signage and all other metal surfaces;
- a font selection consistent with the desired downtown character;
- the downtown logo may simply be the phrase “Downtown” in the same font as the gateway sign; and
- the logo shall reflect design components of the gateway and directional signs.



*Figure 4-13: Street banner*



*Figure 4-14: Sign located at the intersection of  
Colorado Boulevard and 5th Street*

## STREET BANNERS

Banners or flags for use on area light standards shall be included in the signage program (*Figure 4-13*). Banners with an appropriate downtown logo and graphic representing a community-wide special event or festival such as Miners Day shall be developed. Banners may be changed periodically to provide advertisement for special downtown events and promotions.

## 4.9 KEY INTERSECTIONS

Due to their high visibility and substantial vehicular and pedestrian interaction, key intersections play a vital role in downtown Frederick's beautification. Intersections have the highest potential for impacting visitors due to their frequent role of stopping both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. In addition, some key intersections such as 5th Street and Colorado Boulevard (*Figure 4-14*) act as a gateway to the downtown area. Therefore, it is important to have attractive signage and landscaping that encourages visitors to enter the downtown. Ultimately, these key intersections provide an opportunity to enhance the street aesthetically and safety-wise, and potential improvements include accent paving, pedestrian-friendly crossings, additional landscaping at corners, directional signage where appropriate, and street furnishings.

There are several key intersections within the downtown area that are opportunities for improvements. They occur at 5th Street and Colorado Boulevard; 5th Street and Main Street; 5th Street and Oak Street; and any other crossings that may accommodate heavy pedestrian traffic.



### 4.10 PARKS, PLAZAS, AND PUBLIC SPACES

#### PARKS/PLAZAS

Crist Park should be preserved and enhanced to accommodate different types of activities and events. This public gathering space shall serve to establish a sense of place and identity and provide a location for recreation, events and festivals, and entertainment such as family movie nights. In addition, locations for public “pocket” plazas within the downtown area should be given consideration and can provide a place for outdoor dining, socialization, events, and street buskers.

Public parks and plazas in downtown Frederick shall adhere to the following guidelines:

- Well-designed public space shall provide ongoing opportunities for activities that create an interactive environment, build a sense of community, and create opportunities for events, entertainment, and gatherings (*Figure 4-15*).



*Figure 4-15: Create opportunities for community events*



## PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS, DESIGN STANDARDS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Public spaces shall be designed with flexibility for physical use and be located to accommodate a range of desired activities such as outdoor seating, entertainment, and festivals. They shall contribute to real and perceived public safety.
- Public space lighting shall be low in height with a maximum height of 16'. The overall lighting in plazas shall average two footcandles and incorporate pedestrian-oriented lights, such as light bollards, pole lights, and wall-mounted lights. Uplighting/downlighting of trees and other site features or elements is also encouraged.
- Provide pedestrian amenities like seating, lighting, planters, fountains, drinking fountains, distinctive paving, public art, landscaping, and bicycle parking. They shall also incorporate focal points such as sculptures and interactive water features, and community fountains.
- Covered areas along the perimeter of parks and plazas (e.g. vine-covered pergola) are strongly encouraged to provide protection from rain and/or sun.
- Soft landscaping as well as hard-surfaced areas shall be incorporated into the overall plaza design. Color, form, and texture are an integral part of the design of these public spaces.